

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Thursday June 11, 2020

Joseph Edlow
Deputy Director for Policy
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
Washington, D.C.

Dear Deputy Director Edlow,

We write today to inquire as to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's (USCIS) current plan of action as it pertains to recent potential layoffs and furloughs at USCIS offices in the greater Kansas City region, including the National Benefits Center and National Records Center. As you know, thousands of our constituents are employed as federal workers and contractors at multiple sites throughout the area. In mid-May, USCIS sent layoff notices to about 1,000 contractors that were due to be effective the following week.¹ After public and congressional pressure, the contract was extended for 30 days until June 29.² Additionally, USCIS has said that up to 50 percent of the federal employee workforce may be furloughed starting in mid-July without emergency funding from Congress.³ Employees may receive furlough notices as soon as June 17-20, effective for the following month. We therefore request that you share plans to ensure another disruption of employment does not occur, putting in jeopardy the livelihoods of many families in our districts. Due to the urgency of this situation, we respectfully request you share these plans immediately.

In order to ensure a timely response from Congress on this issue, we request the following information:

- How does the emergency supplemental request ensure no additional employee or contractor job losses for the remainder of this fiscal year and into the 2021 fiscal year at the National Benefits Center (NBC) and National Records Center (NRC)? If this supplemental is approved, will the contracts for the NBC and the NRC be renewed and for how long?
- What is the near- and long-term outlook for employee and contractor workforce nationally?
- Does USCIS anticipate any reduction or termination of contracts over the next year, even if the supplemental is approved?

¹ <https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article242937081.html>

² <https://www.bizjournals.com/kansascity/news/2020/05/28/nbc-avoids-kc-layoffs.html>

³ <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2020/05/uscis-threatens-furloughs-amid-budget-shortfall-tsa-to-offer-more-early-retirements/>

- Does USCIS anticipate continued reduction in applications, as well as fee revenue, as compared to previous fiscal years?
- If additional restrictions on visa applications are announced, how will that impact USCIS's budget? Does the component estimate that additional supplemental funds would be required?
- How would additional restrictions on visas impact the National Benefits Center and National Records Center workload and workforce?

Thank you for your timely response to these questions by Wednesday June 17, 2020, and please consider this communication the beginning of a dialogue on this matter. These folks are our constituents and we look forward to working with you in the future to safeguard their positions as they serve our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emanuel Cleaver, II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sharice L. Davids". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver, II
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Cleaver:

Thank you for your June 11, 2020 letter regarding potential administrative furloughs at the National Benefits Center (NBC) and National Records Center.

On May 26, 2020, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) determined that it would be able to continue to fund the NBC Records Operations Contract at full performance levels through June 29, 2020 and has since extended the contract at full performance levels for one additional month through July 29, 2020. This would allow the NBC to sustain operational capabilities and facilitate work to our field offices as those offices resume in-person services. That is, two one-month options were exercised to extend the NBC contract to July 29, 2020. There should not be any impact to the NBC contract until that time.

As you are aware, USCIS is facing severe financial difficulties because of a reduction in application and petition fees during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, USCIS is unable to commit that further funding will be available to continue full performance of the NBC contract beyond July 29, 2020. Please find enclosed additional information in response to the questions posed in your letter.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 272-1940.

Sincerely,



Joseph Edlow
Deputy Director for Policy

Enclosure

cc:

The Honorable Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress